

Creative City and the Sustainable Life:

A Study on the Making of Cultural Spaces in Osaka and Bandung¹

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Abstract

The terms creative city and creative class are notable in how urban development is understood today, and stress the importance of culture, art, and creativity in the urban context. This research critically examines the notion of creative city as a causal mechanism in changes in production and consumption in the urban and suburban regeneration of Osaka, Japan, and Bandung, Indonesia. It also draws attention to the effects of the “creative city model” in the cultural policies of these two cities within globally competitive economic platforms. By doing so, the research critiques this model vis-à-vis the potential of artists, academics, art activists, and creative people to seek alternative cultural sustainability.

Keywords: *Creative class, Creative city, Sustainable life, Creative Class Subculture*

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Introduction

Due to the changing economic platforms of the late twentieth century, cities around the world have seen a renaissance in new cultural facilities: from theaters, museums, and concert halls, to public arts and creative art centers. Asian cities are also beginning to develop new cultural facilities as well. Economic policy advisors hold common perceptions that Asian cities can change from chaotic to creative cities if Asian governments tap cultural resources for economic growth. This prompts countries in Asia to provide their peoples with “what is necessary” to bring about a better future for the cultural life of their cities. A recent example of this approach was an extensive discussion on corporate innovation and creativity in Asia at the World Economic Forum-Asia in June 2006 in Tokyo.

Many countries in Asia, including Japan, Korea, China, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines, have initiated creative city policies, but there is yet to be a study of the different formations of creative cities, particularly the role of creative people who practice their arts and initiate cultural activities in those cities. This research aims to understand critical practices of creative people in the making of cultural spaces in Osaka, Japan and Bandung, Indonesia in an attempt to examine creative city policy from a ground view. Why Osaka and Bandung? Creative people in both places are taking on critical roles in cultural planning and the creation of cultural spaces in different socio-cultural contexts. Osaka and Bandung also both started to learn about creative city policy at about the same time.

This paper begins with a review of the creative city and the creative class, examining the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings. The second section develops a critique of the relationship between creative class, creative cities, and the sustainable life. The paper then presents case studies from Osaka and Bandung, focusing on the making of cultural spaces as a process that links production and consumption, public and private. The final section suggests a useful way to interpret and understand the significant role of creative people in cultural production and the creation of cultural spaces in contemporary cities, and what their relations are to sustainable life.

Theoretical Framework: Creative City and Creative Class

One of the notable notions of how urban development is understood today is based on terms of creative city and creative class, which stress the importance of culture, art, and creativity in the urban context. These notions have come to be discussed widely among policy makers, local governments, and academics (Hartley, 2005). The creative city approach, coined mainly by Richard Florida (2002) and Charles Landry (2000), has attracted worldwide attention. The initial concept of creative city appeared as a role model for post-industrial cities struggling with changes in production and consumption in urban areas. Then, amidst global competition, it became a new urban planning agenda of policymakers in developing countries. This line of thought suits the neo-liberal persuasion that views cities and regions as players in a global market (Pratt, 2011; Sasaki, 2008).

Due to its wide discourse, the creative city concept deserves significant examination and reflection. Correspondingly, a broad range of critiques by academics and community, grassroots voices has formed around the implementation of creative

city strategies (Hahn, 2010). It draws attention to the effects of the creative city model in the context of global competition and encouragement of the new urban planning agenda, such as gentrification and growing inequalities. This research aims to delve deeper into this critique by analyzing the potential of artists and creative people within Osaka and Bandung to enable processes towards the making of their own sustainable cultural spaces.

It is necessary to discuss Charles Landry's creative city concept in order to critically examine the notion of the creative city as a causal mechanism in urban cultural development. The neoliberal approach of manufacturing the relocation of art and culture into cultural industry is part of the transformation into the "knowledge business." With the legacy of past investment in education, developed countries are likely to do well with Landry's concept. Since the mid-1990s, first in the British and then in European and American contexts, the creative city concept has become a normative paradigm and a new model of orientation for urban planning. The importance and relevance of this is not only the wide application of the creative city concept itself but also its evolution into a planning strategy, which affects many cities and their residents. The current strategies of creative city, emphasizing arts and culture to boost the local economy, set up a paradox between commercial and public interests. The problem of presenting the "creative city" as a higher form of urban development exists not only in cities in developed countries (Pratt, 2010; Tummers, 2012) but also in developing countries (Manteccon, 2012; Oo, 2008; Phetsiengda, 2008). However, the creative city model requires a closer look in terms of "creative class" as coined by Richard Florida.

Richard Florida's creative class is defined as those whose occupations range from artists and software designers (the "super-creative core") to management and legal experts (the "creative professionals"). Florida argues that these occupations are the "magnets" to which mobile, high tech, and high growth firms are drawn (Florida, 2002). In turn, it is argued that what draws the people who populate these critical occupations are tolerant or liberal communities and work environments. Florida's works on the creative class and cities have focused on a means of measuring of economic value-creation by human creativities, and hence ranking, what he argues are the most significant characteristics that make cities "creative" (Florida, 2005). What is clear is that the notion of Florida's creative class and cities contributes to such recent urban development without an understanding of how the different levels of hegemony, exploitation, and power relations manifest themselves in these professional occupations and works in the cities.

As we have seen from above, there are fundamental conceptual confusions in the analysis of the creative city and the creative class that fail to see what they actually are instead of what they are imagined to be. The numerous problematic effects addressed can be regarded as the connections among areas of culture, arts, and creativity in terms of the making of sustainable cultural spaces and places. This research attempts to fill some of the current gaps of the creative city and creative class concepts by offering a range of critical questions and examinations of different practices. By doing so, it will critique the idea behind the creative class

boosting a city creatively. What is missing in Florida's creative class is an analysis of the politics of creative occupations and work environments. We need a radical proposal on how to understand the politics of creative class and its creative process in the urban context. To formulate this we need to better understand the creative process and subcultures. That is why "*creative class subculture*" must be differentiated from Florida's creative class, which strictly focuses on education, creativity, and employment in professional occupations.

Creative class subcultures are social groups of people who have an affinity with one another. Because of a set of shared practices and ways of life, actors and participants in subcultures are not always economically marginal but they are usually culturally marginal (Sawangchot, 2010). Thus, subcultures in many forms are characterized by how they differ from popular entertainment: offering a creative form that is innovative, experimental, hybrid, non-commercial, and devoted to overthrowing dominant culture. Creative class subcultures also are new counter-cultural groups, or what are called "Freeter" in Japan (Mouri, 2005), "Indies" in Indonesia (Luvaas, 2013), and "Alter" in Thailand (Sawangchot, 2007). Music, art, and fashion are the core of their affinities (Hebdige, 1983; McRobbies, 2003) and they are sometimes described as self-consciously marginal groups in contemporary urban contexts. Therefore, the theorization of creative class subculture should be based on the significant differences in diversity of new modulations and regulations of the creative process. Moreover, the increasing fragmentation of their work conditions is happening on all levels of life such as the unequal proportions between paid and unpaid work and between work and free time.

However, creative class subcultures cannot be considered as entirely autonomous actors. They can be considered as key agents of change while remaining somewhat autonomous (Atkison and Easthope, 2009; Peck, 2009). Their cultural spaces are not included in the creative city model shown in the top-down governance policy of creative city. Their struggles in the field of culture are spatial and symbolic representations in urban public spaces and places. Therefore, it can be helpful to look closer at the potential of creative class subcultures in the making of cultural spaces in Osaka and Bandung.

Creative City: Why Osaka and Bandung?

Nowadays, the trend of creative city policy can be seen in many Asian cities, such as Kanazawa (Japan), Penang (Malaysia), Chiang Mai (Thailand) and Bangalore (India). Osaka and Bandung are facing a great deal more attention to be creative cities due to the pressures of urban conflict, social differences, and cultural globalization. Young creative people in these two cities initially started to address these problems by using their creativities.

Learning from the creative cities of Osaka and Bandung from the grounded experience of participant observation and interviews, documentation and fieldwork in Osaka was conducted from February to June 2014 and in Bandung from July to October 2014. As this research is an exploratory study, collection of a small amount of data is the most appropriate for this method. There is no need for hypotheses at

the outset but to develop them as the inquiry unfolds. Importantly, doing field-work is important for reflection and conceptual analysis (Bott, 1957/1968:8-9). Therefore, the main interviews focused on the creative process in everyday life, in the workplace and in leisure time. Formal interviews were recorded but many informal conversations were not recorded to avoid any discomfort of the interviewees. Close contact with key informants provided better understanding of creative processes and new questions were always followed up in further rounds of meetings. Many photographs and video clips taken of music, art, and performance events were also useful for analysis. Although this ethnographical method is usually characterized as qualitative or subjective, quality data was often sought through direct involvement in the interactions to reflect the social realities (Giddens, 2006:646) of the case studies.

Osaka

Osaka is the third largest city in Japan after Tokyo and Yokohama, and had more than 2,600,000 residents in 2011. During the Edo period (1603-1868), Osaka produced a number of great Japanese novelists and theatrical artists. Yet historically, from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, Osaka was regarded as the merchant city of Japan, called “the kitchen of the world” (*tenka no daidokoro*). Since the end of the nineteenth century, local leaders of Osaka have put more emphasis on economic success rather than cultural development, and cultural sectors consequently declined. After World War II, Osaka developed as an industrial center in Japan.

Osaka is one of first cities in Japan to set up a cultural promotion policy. In 1972, the governor of Osaka prefecture joined with university researchers, writers, and artists to discuss the distinctive characteristics of Osaka’s culture and how these could be financially supported by the city’s new administration. A Department of Culture was established a few years later (Kobayashi, 2012:22-23). An “Action Plan for Arts and Culture” was established by Osaka City in 2001, proposing a new idea of Osaka: the city’s identity should not be that of a commercially based city, but that of a culturally based city in comparison with Tokyo and Yokohama (Nagakawa, 2003). Though many projects have been carried out under this plan, most art events and cultural projects in Osaka are still based on commercial needs. That is to say, the Osaka city government has not been as actively involved in the making of cultural public spaces as private enterprises. This has been criticized by many artists, academics, and cultural activists.

Consequently, in 2013, Osaka City set up the Osaka Arts Council to take charge of art and cultural projects. Although the council decided to promote art and cultural projects regardless of genre or platform, there is a lack of support for the alternative or contemporary arts of creative people, not only of artists. The council was established to provide funds for art, culture, and health activities in the city of Osaka but there is not any initiative to promote Osaka as a creative city like there is in Kanazawa and Yokohama. It can be argued that it is difficult to imagine Osaka as a cultural city compared to neighboring cities in Kansai area such as Kyoto and Nara. This research conducted fieldwork in three cultural spaces in Osaka.

Bar Kitty

Bar Kitty, in Abiko-Higashi, Sugimoto-cho, Osaka City, is not a regular Japanese bar. It is an alternative art space with a library, gallery, exhibition space, music performances, and an information shop. Bar Kitty is located in a residential area near Abiko station, in the southern part of Osaka near Osaka City University. Bar Kitty was initially started by a young Japanese couple, Tetsuya, who used to be a member of the Konohana Media Center, and Kaori Dohgaze, who took over a regular bar in early 2013. Both of them are artists. Kaori works with the Kansai Queer Film festival and is a content editor for the website of the Kansai Art Beat, a network of artists in Kansai. Kaori taught private English courses for Japanese people and started to teach English as a part-time lecturer for art students at the Kyoto University of the Arts in mid-2014. After a couple of years in an office job, Tetsuya quit and has been running Bar Kitty as full-time work since mid-2014.

$$La = \frac{P_0 \cdot K (1 + R - C)^t - PAM - Pa}{Z}$$

La	Total area of urban park to be developed
P₀	Total number of Population
K	Level of Water Consumption/per capital (litre/per day)
R	Speed of Water Usage
C	Factor of Deviation
PAM	Total water supply
T	Year
Pa	Potential of Ground Water
Z	Permeability Level

Figure 1. Tetsuya and Kaori (right in the picture) organized a monthly program on the Fukushima case with film screening and discussion forum in May, 2014.

At Bar Kitty, Tetsuya and Kaori organize monthly programs such as film screenings, music CD launches, and social discussion forums. Many activists, artists, DJs, musicians, photographers, and others are invited to join the programs and a small fee is charged to attend. For example, in May 2014 they held a documentary film screening that included a discussion forum on Japanese nuclear power and the Fukushima case. Many artists, activists, and academics based in Kansai and Tokyo came to join the program. Bar Kitty's regular customers arrange a topic to discuss in the monthly "Pretend Koukou," an open-discussion program. Topics include Japanese experimental and noise music, Orientalism, and films.

Cocoroom

Cocoroom, in Nishinari-ku, Osaka, is information and café shop next to the Kaman Media Center. Cocoroom is run by Endo Tomoaki, a photographer and ex-Phd student in international cultural studies, and his staff. Both Cocoroom and Kaman Media Center are located in Osaka's old downtown near the main railway station,

Tenochi. Both are non-profit organizations (NPOs) working with daily laborers and aged people who are forced to live and gather in the Nishinari area in Namagasaki (the working class area of Osaka since the 1950s). The aim of their work is to connect arts with the society and the two have termed themselves “the art NPO.” Kaman! Media Center is not only a media center but also operates a second-hand shop selling common goods for the poor. Cocoroom operates as a non-profit organization (NPO), creating plans every fiscal year and receiving funds from different sources.

Cocoroom and Kaman! Media Center create a space where activists, artists, cultural and media practitioners, aging people in the community, and anyone in between, can come to share and know each other. For example, Cocoroom and Hitohana center, another NPO in Nishinari, jointly organized an Italian masque workshop for aging and ex-homeless people in March 2014. This workshop was a pilot project to give the elderly in Namagasaki community an opportunity to learn to play masque by themselves. The show was opened to all and many community members came to join the show. This activity was supported by Osaka City, Urban Research Plaza, Osaka City University, and Fraternal Compagnia, an Italian masque group. Urban Research Plaza is a model for the grassroots movement and organizing art activities, and cooperates with Cocoroom on many art and cultural projects in the Namagasaki area.

Konohana Artists Group

Konohana is in Osaka’s old residential area near Nishikujo station on the Osaka loop line. It initially turned to be an art area/community in 2008. A real estate company in Konohana that wanted to boost art activities in on the outskirts of Osaka decreased rents for artists, drawing young Japanese artists to the area. About ten artists and cultural workers shared a house in Konohana and turned it into the Konohana Media Center; this house used to be a sewing factory. They used the house for shared house and art space until 2011. Along the canal in this area, another Japanese artist rented an old warehouse and in 2009 renovated it to be café (called Baikado) and gallery (called Ontonari). All of these have helped Konohana to become a new spot for young artists in Osaka.

Since 2010 Konohana has many alternative art venues, such as concert spaces, theaters, galleries, art studios, and café shops, which were hardly found in Osaka before then. Today Konohana has the Konohana Media Center (2011), The Three Konohana, No Architecture, Port, Mototabakoya, Pos-Lab, Figya, MIIT House, and other spaces currently under renovation. Most event attendees come to know these places through their social network. MIIT House and Figya always organize monthly music and art performances. Participation in art and cultural activities does not demand initial skill, experience, or a particular aesthetic. Moreover, art-related activities in these art spaces do not cost much to setup and do not make much money; though there are fees to attend (usually around 300 Yen or \$2.50 US). Thus, most of Konohana artists always run their own businesses, such as a coffee shop, guesthouse, art gallery, or shared office, in their art spaces.

Akira Okawa, an architect and owner of Pos-Lab, and an acting coordinator of Konohana Artists Group, said Konohana does easily accommodate practicing artists who need semi-centrality for interaction and information in Osaka. He and his colleagues help organize an art forum called KANO (Konohana Arts Meeting for Osaka) to help to boost creative cultural spaces effectively in Konohana and other parts of Osaka. However, the Konohana art area has not attracted the funding body of the Creative Osaka project or the Osaka Arts Council. The Konohana art area is thus an under-capitalized site on the outskirts of Osaka that is not included in inner city redevelopment and regeneration plans. It has also never been mapped as a part of Osaka's official creative city policy.

Bandung

Bandung is the capital city of West Java province. It is Indonesia's third largest city by population and its second largest metropolitan area, with 8,600,000 residents in 2011. Dutch colonialists established tea plantations in Bandung and in 1888 the first railroad was constructed to link Bandung and Jakarta (then called "Batavia"), helping boost economic and cultural activities. Europeans from Batavia were gradually attracted to Bandung's urban scapes as a holiday destination. Infrastructure introduced into Bandung at that time, such as cafes, restaurants, shops, and art-deco hotels, catered to a European lifestyle and caused Bandung to be named "Paris van Java." Since Indonesia achieved independence in 1945, Bandung has experienced rapid development and urbanization. From the 1970s to 1990s, economic growth has spurred consumption activities among Bandung citizens.

From the late 1990s to 2000, the political and institutional decentralization of the centralized bureaucracy and democratization of regional economies under the post-Suharto regime certainly laid the future path for Bandung as the creative city in Indonesia. Bandung began to emerge as a city of new cultural consumption and production, attracting Jakarta and Surabaya citizens for weekend leisure. The local government of Bandung helped create collaborative networks of artists, local investors, and international agencies to put the Bandung creative city model into practice. These actors actively promoted cultural industries that relied on the emergence of technology and highly skilled creative graduates, thus establishing the notion of "Bandung creative city" (Aritentang, 2013:140-142).

Moreover, Indonesia's former president, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, put the success of creative industries on the national economic agenda. In a creative economy paper for 2009-2015, the Indonesian government launched its vision for 2025: "The Indonesia nation with good quality of life and creativity in the world" (cited in Simatupang et al., 2012:186-188). In 2011, the Indonesian government changed the Ministry of Tourism to the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy to rebrand Indonesia within the competitiveness of the world creative economy. Indonesia's former trade minister currently leads the new ministry. The new mayor of Bandung who came into power in late of 2013, M. Ridwan Kamil, is the founder of the URBANE office in Bandung and the first secretary of the Bandung Creative City Forum (BCCF). He strongly supports Bandung to be a creative city exploring

the potential the various types of local creativity, such as traditional handicrafts, film, music, architecture, and design. Fieldwork was conducted in three places in Bandung.

Homeless Dawg

Established in the mid-2000s, Homeless Dawg—a brand and decal used on famous subculture items created by Zemo Cabelero, a Bandung native—helped develop Bandung’s local brand. Zemo’s family left Bandung when he was a student in business school, causing him to stop studying and leaving him with no place to live. He met Gustav H. Iskandar, the head of the Bandung Center for New Media Arts, who let him stay at the center for a couple of years. At the center Zemo met many people such as new media artists, fashion designers, rock musicians, and cultural activists who helped him improve his social skills. Zemo calls himself “homeless” and a “nighttime entertainer.”

Zemo is a self-taught designer learning western fashion trends by “copy and paste.” Based on his love of heavy metal and hardcore music, Zemo decided to create his own brand called “Homeless Dawg.” In the beginning he just wanted to make things that he wanted to wear for his necessary clothes. In those days Zemo had no one but himself to please, but later Homeless Dawg grew as its owner’s life continued strongly and he moved from Bandung Center for New Media Arts to rent his own room. He started selling Homeless Dawg merchandize through other distros (distribution shops) on the fashion streets of Bandung, such as Liew and Dago. Zemo now has his own distro in a slum in a suburb of Bandung with a sewing and screening shop nearby. Costumers around the world can order Homeless Dawg merchandize through catalogues and via Facebook. It can be argued that the t-shirt loving heavy metal music community and Bandung’s street life have made Zemo and his own brand, Homeless Dawg, what they are today.

Common Room

Common Room or Common Room Network Foundation, on Jalan Muararaeunin Bandung, is a nonprofit organization formerly (from 2001 to 2006) known as the Bandung Center for New Media Arts. It was initially organized in 2001 by Gustaff H. Iskandar, an Indonesian artist and cultural activist based in Bandung, and his colleagues. Since 2003, it has served diverse individuals, communities, and organizations with increasing participation and cooperation. It has become a place where people can add, edit, and execute activities based on their own purposes and interests, which mainly focus on developing public knowledge and creativity. Common Room has been facilitating numerous exhibitions, screenings, workshops, lectures, discussions, small-scale music concerts, and cultural festivals.

One of Common Room’s early projects was the 2005 project Urban Cartography. This project mapped Do-It-Yourself (DIY) communities in Bandung that had been around since the 1990s, including punk, skateboarder, independent fashion, book, and music venues. In 2008, Common Room, with Bandung Creative City Forum, organized a week-long festival (the Helar Festival), attempting to integrate local

community, youngster and creative industry actors and boost the sustainability of creative platforms in Bandung. Common Room remains a place that bridges dialogue and multidisciplinary cooperation intended to connect numerous individuals, communities, and organizations with diverse economic, social, and micro-political interests through negotiations, daily experiences, and knowledge exchange. For example Gustaff and his colleagues recently wrote a “P-P-P” (people, public, product) proposal to renovate an old military medicine factory into a public place. Common Room is a relatively independent forum, but survives on many resources both local and international.



Figure 2. A meeting to write a P-P-P proposal by Gustaff H. Iskandar and his colleagues at the Common Room.

Bandung Creative City Forum (BCCF)

Bandung Creative City Form, formerly known as the Creative Community of the City of Bandung, was initially established in 2008. BCCF's first chair was M. Ridwan Kamil, now the mayor of Bandung. BCCF is a melting pot for many events and enables the growth of new ideas that accommodate the needs of dialogue, conventions, and multidisciplinary collaborations among creative people, policy makers, and the public. Some of BCCF's first initiatives were the 2008 and the 2009 Helar festivals. These festivals were meant to promote Bandung as a creative city and explore the various types of local creativity, such as traditional handicrafts, films, music, architecture, and design. In 2010, BCCF organized another festival, Semarak Bandung (festival Bandung), which included light projections on landmark buildings and an event to celebrate and restore the glory of Braga, the old colonial shopping street in the heart of Bandung. Most importantly, the staff of Bandung Creative City Forum initially discussed and wrote about a suitable model of creative city for Bandung by proposing a major 5-year “Creative Bandung” plan (for 2015-2020).

BCCF has also been involved in the creation of a Bandung branch of the British Council, supported by the creative Entrepreneur Network. Indonesia's national creative industry policy of 2011 was inspired by the initiatives of the Bandung Creative City Forum. In 2013, BCCF signed an MOU with the city of Chiang Mai in Thailand, Penang (Malaysia), and Zebu (the Philippines) to create a Southeast Asian Creative Cities Network. TitiLarusti, a university lecture and BCCF's secretary, said this network is not merely a physical space; it has also become a transit space facilitating the public, researchers, artists, and business actors in developing creative knowledge and collaboration.

As we have seen from the above, there are differences in the current conditions of the creative cities of Osaka and Bandung and their respective creative city policies. Japan has seen a growing interest in the creative city concept due to difficulties in emerging from the post economic bubble recession of the 1990s (Goto, 2008). In Bandung, a city in a developing country, the growing interest has come from the decentralization of the post-Suharto regime and the globalization of the world economy (Aritentang, 2013). As previously mentioned, in order to talk about creative city policy it is necessary to talk about the cultural spaces and activities initiated by creative class subcultures in these two cities.

Creativities Without Policy Implements

The goal of this research is not only to explore the importance of creative class subcultures in the pursuit of creating cultural spaces but also to begin differentiating between the competing discursive practices of those subcultures and the creative city concept in working towards sustainable development of Osaka and Bandung. According to this research project, with respect to local sustainability, most creative cultural spaces have been made in Osaka and Bandung since the mid-2000s, and were initially invented by creative class subcultures.

Taking into account the differences between the case studies, I would like to classify cultural spaces and "spatial participations of cultural sustainability" of the practices of creative class subcultures as follows:

Alternative Consumption and Creative Production: Kitty Bar and Homeless Dawg

Alternative creative activities and low-profit creative activities/products such as Kitty Bar and Homeless Dawg tend to be self-organized creative clusters in areas such as old residential, suburban, and industrial areas characterized by highly mobility and low rent use. These areas are unlikely to be disturbed by government urban planning and finance renovating. Kaori Dohgaze said, "I want my own space. Bar Kitty is a community making." Zemo Cabelero mentioned, "I have only creativity, not money. Homeless Dawg lets me meet friends around the world though I never go abroad." Their activities are not only examining art/music/cultural activities that emerge in relation to negotiating with the making of creativities and cultural spaces, but also shaping their identities in everyday life. Are their intrinsic spatial needs met by the creative city policy of Osaka and Bandung? Before going into this question, a few more aspects of the cases will be examined.

Creative Community and Social Exclusion: Cocoroom and Common Room

The sites and activities of non-profit groups such as Cocoroom and Common Room are open to flows across public and private sectors, profit and not-for-profit activities, and between social, economic, and cultural domains. The various hybrid activities of music, theatre, performances, informal education, and new media art are from the primordial groups of cultural producers/activists in Osaka and Bandung. They have the capacity to highly influence participation, catalyzing the transition from private places to public spaces and often conferring much boarder cultural and social benefit. Endo Tomoaki mentioned, “Cocoroom is like a social center for elders and homeless in southern Osaka. They have nothing to do. They come here to meet old and new friends.” Gustaff H. Iskandar said, “Common Room is open 24 hours. The youngsters can come to hang around whatever time they want. Importantly, we always keep a Do-It-Yourself ethos.” It can be argued that where these initiatives are going might be considered as “creative city in the making” without some government policy. Thus, the governments’ creative city strategies do not easily accommodate the ongoing practices of NPOs such as Cocoroom and Common Room. Attempts to implement policies into practices, whether intended or unintended, should be further considered as follows:

Creative Agents and Policy Intervention:

Konohana Artists Group and Bandung Creative City Forum

Konohana Artists Group and Bandung Creative Cities Forum have remained critical of the development project of Creative Bandung and Creative Osaka. At the moment, there is a dominance of economics over culture in creative city policies in both cities. Titi Larusti argued that, “If economic development is the only argument where creative people, community and youngsters can participate, and then it is not suitable for Bandung.” Jerry Gordon said, “Because house rent is so cheap so that we can manage our shows at MIIT House. Government funding is good, but, actually, business here is for fun.” Critics have also noted that policies tend to support artists working with the local government and other art institutions rather than directly supporting creative artists/producers themselves. Government is rarely prepared to fund community initiatives. Official policies have focused on the material infrastructure of cities rather than the more urgent issue of increasing people’s access to public art and cultural sustainability. Contesting the creative city model in Osaka and Bandung, these case studies show that there is also still a lack of public forums for communities and local government to meet and exchange ideas on art and cultural activities within the framework of cultural policies.

For creative class subcultures in Osaka and Bandung, creative cities should be alternative spaces and places such as Bar Kitty and Homeless Dawg: a lifestyle pub, small gallery, coffee shop, reading room, new media lab, distro and so on, not large scale creative clusters or state art institutions. In the cases of Cocoroom and Common Room, being relatively free from the local government’s creative city policies allows their creative culture and everyday life practices to play important roles. When common people come to join, community-making takes off naturally and

is therefore more likely to be sustainable. The Konohana Artists Group and Bandung Creative Cities Forum try to frame the potential benefits among community, private interests, and public policy. They challenge the creative city model invented by armchair policymakers. From these cases it can be argued that “creativity” should be ways of understanding and should shift strategic decisions about the making of cultural spaces to permeate through the most fundamental rationales of urban life and policymaking.

The research seeks to examine creative platforms in the making of cultural spaces in Osaka and Bandung. It found that creative class subcultures in Osaka and Bandung play a pivotal role in creating particular (semi) private places into spaces of contact of culture, economies, and social relations. Their (hybrid) cultural activities hold the potential to create a creative city that is a socially sustainable urban development rather than an economic development. That’s why these subculture actors are not included in top-down creative city policies. Andy C. Pratt pointed out that it is a cultural contradiction of the creative city when the notion of neo-liberalism and creativity underpin the creative city model (Pratt, 2011). Actually, the problems facing the creative city model are increasing innovative strategies for creative cities under advisement of many agencies such as the British Council and UNESCO.

In the context of huge increases in consumption cultures and media entertainments in recent years, the creative class subcultures of Osaka and Bandung have made challenging choices to create (counter) cultural spaces. Cultural spaces, in addition to cultural industries and cultural consumption, should be contested fields of alternative creative city policy making. The understanding of economic growth and urban development that is deeply embedded in the perspectives of policymakers and urban developers working on creative city policies should be shifted to networks among NPOs, artist groups, creative people, urban researchers, local government actors, and corporations. A critical model of the creative city model is needed to highlight the significant role of community, inherent human capacities, innovative resource allocation, and local-problem solving. This includes discussions of suitable creative cities for popular art and contemporary culture.

Conclusion

The research identifies the creative class subculture in a way that allows the struggles in the field of work conditions and environment to connect with the struggles in the recent fields of culture. The sustainability efforts of creative class subcultures include the making of their own cultural spaces in the cities where they are living, sometimes with unintended positive social impacts. Yet they are not included in the creative city concept as practiced in top-down governance, and occupy a marginal spatial and symbolic representation in the urban population as well. In the long term, the research suggests such sustainability efforts of creating cultural spaces invented by creative class subcultures in Osaka and Bandung, as compared to creative spaces funded by local governments, will expand at the level of networked practices.

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Endnotes

- 1 An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 13th API Regional Workshop, November 12-14 November, 2014, Hiroshima, Japan.

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